



Australian Bureau of Statistics

1351.0.55.031 - Research Paper: An Analysis of Repeat Imprisonment Trends in Australia using Prisoner Census Data from 1994 to 2007, Aug 2010

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Summary

About this Release

Reducing the number of prisoners who are repeatedly imprisoned is one of the goals of any correctional system. However, while a period of imprisonment may deter some people from re-offending, in others it may foster further criminal behaviour. This paper presents the results of a study based on a longitudinal dataset constructed from 14 successive Prisoner Censuses between 1994 and 2007 to follow, over time, two cohorts of people who were 'released' from prison (where 'release' is a proxy measure derived from the absence of a prisoner's record in a subsequent Prisoner Census). This paper expands on an earlier study by the Australian Bureau of Statistics by using logistic regression models to examine the factors associated with repeat imprisonment and assess whether or not the propensity for reimprisonment has increased over time. This paper also examines trends in criminal career development using descriptive methods, looking at patterns of specialisation, and of movements from one type of offence to another.

The study finds that reimprisonment is strongly associated with being young, being Indigenous, or having been previously imprisoned (that is, being a prisoner who had already served time in prison). In all jurisdictions except Queensland, the rate of reimprisonment in recent years was higher than in the mid-1990s.

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